

# Google CAUGHT Manipulating Search, Buries GOP Campaign Sites in 83% of Top Senate Races



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Anti-Democracy Google is manipulating search results to bury Senate Republican candidates' campaign websites before the 2022 midterm elections. This comes on the heels of a North Carolina State University study that found that Google's Gmail marked 59.3 percent more emails from "right"-leaning candidates as spam compared to "left"-leaning candidates.

"Google must be investigated for its un-American efforts to sway the election," said [L. Brent Bozell](#), founder and president of the Media Research Center. "First, researchers caught Google red-handed by proving Republican campaign emails were sent to spam. Now we've uncovered Google manipulating search results to hide Republican campaign websites while promoting Democratic ones. This is all an effort by Google to help Democrats and interfere in the democratic process."



MRC Free Speech America has analyzed Google, Bing and DuckDuckGo search results for the 12 Senate races identified by RealClearPolitics as the most important to watch. Our researchers caught Google burying 10 of 12 Senate Republican Party candidates' campaign websites while highlighting their opponents campaign sites in organic search results. This stands in stark contrast to Bing and DuckDuckGo whose search results treated Republican and Democrat campaign websites more neutrally than Google.

- **Google buried Senate Republican Party candidates' campaign websites.** Ten of 12 Senate Republican Party candidates' campaign websites (83%) appeared far lower (or did not appear at all) on page one of Google's organic search results compared to their Senate Democratic Party opponents' campaign websites.
- **Google completely hid seven of 12 Senate Republican Party candidates' campaign websites in page one organic search results.** Seven of 12 Senate Republican Party candidates' campaign websites did not appear on page one using Google's organic search. Meanwhile, eight of 12 Senate Democratic Party candidate campaign websites were highlighted in the top six items in organic search results.
- **Google's search result bias is undeniable when compared to Bing and DuckDuckGo.** With the exception of two candidates, both Bing and DuckDuckGo showed both the Senate Democratic Party candidates' campaign websites and the Senate Republican Party candidates' campaign websites in the top five organic search results on page one.

## Recommendations

- Google must stop its war against Democracy. The first step it must take to begin to rebuild trust with conservatives is to:
  - **Provide Transparency:** We need detailed information so everyone can see if liberal groups and users are being treated the same as those on the right. Social media companies operate in a black-box environment, only releasing anecdotes about reports on content and users when they think it necessary. This needs to change. The companies need to design open systems so that they can be held accountable, while giving weight to privacy concerns;
- Members of Congress must also take action to protect Americans' free speech liberties. Congress should fully investigate this search result bias and all efforts by Google to influence the outcome of the midterm elections.

## Methodology

*For this report, MRC Free Speech America has analyzed the Google, Bing and DuckDuckGo search results for the 12 Senate races identified by [RealClearPolitics](#) as the "Top Senate Races" on Oct. 7, 2022. The "Top Senate Races" included the Democratic Party and Republican Party candidates from the following states: Arizona,*

*Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington and Wisconsin.*

*MRC Free Speech America created an algorithm to automate this process in a clean environment. A “clean environment” allows for organic search to populate results without the influence of prior search history and tracking cookies.*

*MRC Free Speech America researchers searched each candidate's name with the words “Senate Race 2022” using the algorithm. To determine bias, our researchers looked at each search engines’ results and recorded the rank(s) of each candidate’s campaign website.*

*Example(s): “Blake Masters Senate Race 2022” and “Mark Kelly Senate Race 2022”*

## **CAUGHT! Google Buries GOP Campaign Sites, Helps Dems Before Midterms**

A study from MRC Free Speech America indicates that Google is manipulating its search results to benefit Democrats just weeks before the midterm elections.

MRC Free Speech America has found that Google search results buried Senate Republican candidates’ campaign websites 83 percent of the time compared to their Democratic opponents. For more than half of these races, Google completely eliminated the Republican campaign websites from the first page of results.

“Google must be investigated for its un-American efforts to sway the election,” said **L. Brent Bozell**, founder and president of the Media Research Center. “First, researchers caught Google red-handed by proving Republican campaign emails were sent to spam. Now we’ve uncovered Google manipulating search results to hide Republican campaign websites while promoting Democratic ones. This is all an effort by Google to help Democrats and interfere in the democratic process.”


Google’s search results are dramatically different from the results on alternative search engines Bing and DuckDuckGo. With the exception of two races, both Bing and DuckDuckGo treated searches for the Republican and Democratic candidates’ sites relatively neutrally, consistently showing the campaign websites of both in the top five search results.

Google’s **long pattern** of anti-Democracy **election interference** is well documented. The most recent example of Google’s bias was exposed in a **study** put out by North Carolina State University that showed that **Gmail was suppressing Republican Party**

**emails.** The partisan nature of Google's absurd censorship prompted MRC Free Speech America to conduct this analysis heading into the 2022 midterm elections. Using a "clean" computer with no search history or embedded cookies, MRC Free Speech America researchers did a keyword search on Oct. 7 for each candidate's name, along with the words "Senate Race 2022," and then analyzed the search results for the 12 **"Top Senate Races"** identified by RealClearPolitics.



The impact of search engine manipulation is enormous. Few users click on links that don't appear on the first page of search results, according to **Brian Dean**, a search engine optimization expert. Dean conducted a study analyzing how often users click on various rankings of Google search results. His blog, Backlinko, **reported** that less than 1 percent of **"Google searchers clicked on something from the second page."** An **older study** conducted by SEO software company Moz in 2014 reported that the second page receives only 3.99 percent of clicks, indicating that the problem has gotten worse over time.

Over 90 percent of all searches are conducted on Google, **according to Business Insider**, so Google's outsized influence makes its conduct uniquely harmful among the Big Tech companies.



Google Search Bias for Top 12 Senate Races

STATE	CANDIDATES	RANK	FAVORS
ARIZONA	<b>R</b> Blake Masters	6	<b>D</b>
	<b>D</b> Mark Kelly	5	
COLORADO	<b>R</b> Joe O'Dea	17	<b>R</b>
	<b>D</b> Michael Bennet	0	
FLORIDA	<b>R</b> Marco Rubio	0	<b>D</b>
	<b>D</b> Val Demings	6	
GEORGIA	<b>R</b> Herschel Walker	0	<b>D</b>
	<b>D</b> Raphael Warnock	5	
MISSOURI	<b>R</b> Eric Schmitt	27	<b>D</b>
	<b>D</b> Trudy Busch	6	
NEVADA	<b>R</b> Adam Laxalt	0	<b>D</b>
	<b>D</b> Catherine Cortez Masto	13	
NEW HAMPSHIRE	<b>R</b> Don Bolduc	0	<b>D</b>
	<b>D</b> Maggie Hassan	8	
NORTH CAROLINA	<b>R</b> Ted Budd	0	<b>D</b>
	<b>D</b> Cheri Beasley	1	
OHIO	<b>R</b> J.D. Vance	0	<b>D</b>
	<b>D</b> Tim Ryan	2	
PENNSYLVANIA	<b>R</b> Mehmet Oz	0	<b>D</b>
	<b>D</b> John Fetterman	3	
WASHINGTON	<b>R</b> Tiffany Smiley	3	<b>R</b>
	<b>D</b> Patty Murray	23	
WISCONSIN	<b>R</b> Ron Johnson	13	<b>D</b>
	<b>D</b> Mandela Barnes	5	

Source: MRC FreeSpeech America analysis of the Google search engine as of October 7, 2022

Because of its power and technological capability to shape elections, liberal psychologist and researcher [Dr. Robert Epstein, Ph.D.](#), has repeatedly warned of the danger Google poses to American voters.

“Google poses a serious threat to democracy,” Dr. Epstein said in his 2019 [testimony](#) to a Senate Judiciary subcommittee. He cited the fact that Google and Big Tech have the power to change 15 million votes and added that “to let Big Tech get away with subliminal manipulation on this scale would be to make the free and fair election meaningless.”

Dr. Epstein has [extensively researched](#) and monitored what users experienced while using Google products in the lead-up to the 2016, 2018 and 2020 elections.

Dr. Epstein also noted in an [interview](#) with Fox News host and contributor [Tucker Carlson](#) in 2020 that “Google’s search results were strongly biased in favor of liberals and Democrats.” He also said that the bias was being shown to every user but that conservative users who participated in the study received “slightly more liberal bias in their search results than liberals did.” Dr. Epstein further pointed out that conservatives did not receive a Google “vote reminder” on Google’s homepage until after he had released some of his findings.

The potential effect of Google’s bias is deeply disturbing. He explained, “The bottom line at the moment is that these manipulations, the ones that we have so far quantified, could easily have shifted at least six million votes in just one direction. That’s the bare minimum.”

### **Google buried Senate Republican Party candidates’ campaign websites.**

Ten of the 12 Republican websites appeared far lower (or did not appear at all) in Google’s search results compared to opponents’ campaign websites. In fact, Google completely hid seven of the 12 Republican websites. Conversely, Google highlighted eight of the 12 Democratic websites, having them appear in the critically important top six search results.

The Google results for North Carolina’s Senate candidates are an example of Google’s most egregious election interference. Republican Rep. [Ted Budd](#)’s campaign website did not appear anywhere on the first page of Google’s search results, while Democrat [Cheri Beasley](#)’s campaign website was the very first result.

The hotly contested Ohio and Pennsylvania races tell a similar story. Ohio Democrat Rep. [Tim Ryan](#)’s campaign website appeared as the second Google search result, and Pennsylvania’s Democrat [John Fetterman](#)’s website appeared third. The kicker? The



campaign websites of their respective Republican opponents, **J.D. Vance** of Ohio and **Dr. Mehmet Oz** of Pennsylvania were eliminated from the first page of Google search results.

Google also disappeared from the first page of results the websites for other Republican candidates, including Sen. **Marco Rubio** of Florida, **Adam Laxalt** of Nevada, **Don Bolduc** of New Hampshire and **Herschel Walker** of Georgia.

The few Republican campaign websites that avoided complete elimination predictably appeared near the bottom of the first page of results. Missouri Republican **Eric Schmitt**'s campaign website appeared 27th out of 29 results and Wisconsin **Senator Ron Johnson**'s campaign website appeared 13th out of 28 results.

A **Backlinko SEO study** showed that the top six Google search results get 74 percent of all clicks, making Google's biased demotion of key Senate Republican campaign websites all the more nefarious.

### **Google's search result bias is undeniable when compared to Bing and DuckDuckGo.**

MRC Free Speech America researchers ran the same analysis using the Bing and DuckDuckGo search engines and found a very different story.

With the exceptions of Sen. Michael Bennet of Colorado and Dr. Mehmet Oz of Pennsylvania, all other campaign websites, regardless of their political party affiliation, appeared in the top five of both Bing and DuckDuckGo search results.

Vice President of MRC Free Speech America and MRC Business Dan Schneider said that Google's bias is intentional: "Clearly Bing and DuckDuckGo algorithms intentionally placed these websites at the top of search results. It is by design. These algorithms don't write themselves. There's a person who drafts the code to produce the result they want. For Google, we know what they want. They want to boost Democrats and bury Republicans."

### **Google has a long, disturbing history of quietly aiding Democrats.**

Google's bias should come as no surprise. The company has aided Democrat politicians for at least a decade.

- **A recent North Carolina State University study found that Google marked emails of right-leaning candidates as spam.** A North Carolina State University **study** found that Gmail **marked** 59.3 percent more emails from "right"-leaning candidates as spam compared to "left"-leaning candidates. "It appears that the political affiliation of the sender plays [a] role in getting an email marked as

spam,” part of the study’s conclusion read. Google filed with the Federal Election Commission, and on Aug. 11, the FEC **approved** a pilot program that Google proposed to address apparent GOP concerns. However, it seems the pilot program leaves much to be desired. The Republican National Committee **told** MRC Free Speech America on Oct. 3 that Gmail suppressed over 22 million GOP get-out-the-vote and fundraising emails over a three-day period.

- **Google actively worked to help Hillary Clinton win the Latino vote in the 2016 election.** An exclusive **report** by Carlson on his Fox News show **revealed** a disturbing Google **email chain** sent out the day after Election Day in 2016. The first email, “Elections results and the Latino vote,” was written by Eliana Murillo, then Google’s Multicultural Marketing department head. “We also supported partners like Voto Latino to pay for rides to the polls in key states (silent donation),” she reportedly wrote describing Google’s so-called “non-partisan” activities. “We even helped them create ad campaigns to promote the rides (with support from HOLA folks who rallied and volunteered their time to help). We supported Voto Latino to help them land an interview with [state] Senator [Robert] Meza of Arizona (key state for us) to talk about the election and how to use Google search to find information about how to vote.”
- **Former Google CEO Eric Schmidt funded the largest vendor of Clinton’s campaign.** Hillary Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign hired The Groundwork, a technology firm funded by Eric Schmidt, who at the time was the executive chairman of Google’s parent company Alphabet. The firm was reportedly one of the campaign’s “biggest vendors” and was located “just blocks” from Clinton campaign headquarters, according to **Quartz. Michael Slaby**, the chief technology officer for Barack Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign, ran The Groundwork during Clinton’s 2016 presidential run. Quartz reported that he praised Schmidt for using Google resources for Democrat campaigns. “There are a lot of people who can write big checks,” Slaby said. “Eric recognizes how the technology he’s been building his whole career can be applied to different spaces. The idea of tech as a force multiplier is something he deeply understands.”
- **Google was intimately involved in the Obama administration.** The Intercept **reported** in 2016 that “Between January 2009 and October 2015, Google staffers gathered at the White House on 427 separate occasions.” The Intercept also noted that Google Public Policy Director **Johanna Shelton** reportedly visited the White House 128 times, “more than twice as often” as lobbyists from

other top tech companies. The Obama White House also reportedly tasked Google and Google-affiliated employees with fixing the Obamacare website HealthCare.gov when it famously crashed in 2013, according to The Intercept.

### **Google's 2022 employee contribution history correlates with its bias.**

Based on their political donations it's also clear what Google employees want at the ballot box.

Affiliated PACs and employees of Google's parent company Alphabet Inc. gave a total of over \$6 million to Democrat campaigns, organizations and PACs during the 2022 election cycle, according to [Open Secrets](#). Some of the [largest recipients](#) of that money are the Democratic candidates in the 12 "Top Senate Races" that MRC Free Speech America has analyzed.

Alphabet Inc. employees collectively contributed some of the highest dollar amounts to the Democrat opponents of six Republicans whose campaign websites Google hid from the first page of search results.

Alphabet employees gave a combined total of \$595,547 to 10 of the 12 Democrats analyzed in this report: \$230,139 to Georgia Democrat Sen. Raphael Warnock, \$73,558 to Pennsylvania Democrat John Fetterman and \$66,823 to New Hampshire Democrat Sen. Maggie Hassan, according to Open Secrets. Others who received top contributions include Democrats Cheri Beasley, Sen. Catherine Cortez-Masto, Rep. Tim Ryan and Sen. Mark Kelly.

Not surprisingly, Google employees contributed far more to these Democrats than to their opponents, 30 times more. Google employees gave a paltry \$19,188 in total to five of the Republicans included in this report, including only \$33 to Sen. Marco Rubio and \$380 to Sen. Ron Johnson, who are currently considering legislation to curb Google's anti-American efforts.

### **Conclusion:**

Google is the most used search engine in the world. The Alphabet-owned company worth billions has used its size and influence to impact Americans in profoundly negative ways, including by manipulating search results as shown in this report. The tech giant has been accused of tampering with its email system, biasedly sending Republican Party campaign emails to users' spam folders. Google has also made its anti-conservative bias more than clear, working hand-in-glove with the Obama administration and actively working to help Hillary Clinton win the Latino vote in the 2016 presidential election.



While Google touts that **one of its goals** is to “significantly improv[e] the lives of as many people as possible,” its actions show that this does not include the lives of conservatives as it attempts to influence elections in favor of the left.

## Recommendations:

- Google must stop its war against Democracy. The first step it must take to rebuild trust with conservatives is to provide transparency. We need detailed information so everyone can see if liberal groups and users are being treated the same as those on the right. Social media companies operate in a black-box environment, only releasing anecdotes about reports on content and users when they think it necessary. This needs to change. The companies need to design open systems so that they can be held accountable, while giving weight to privacy concerns.
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AMERICA'S MEDIA WATCHDOG



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